SHONA-ENGLISH
ENGLISH-SHONA
(ChiShona)

DICTIONARY AND PHRASEBOOK

AQUILINA MAWADZA

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INTRODUCTION

Shona is the national language of Zimbabwe together with Ndebele. It is the mother tongue of 80% of Zimbabwe's population of about twelve million. Ndebele is spoken by about 20% of the population, principally in the southwest of Zimbabwe (Doke, 1931,4). Shona is the ensemble of all the Shona dialects, namely Zezuru, Karanga, Manyika, KoreKore and Ndau. These dialects provide ethnic identity.

Beach (1994, 23) notes that the Shona language is a member of the great Niger-Congo language family which extends from the west of Africa in the Senegal Valley to the Kenyan coast and south to Namibia and the eastern Cape in Southern Africa. The Bantu branch is dominant over most of Africa south of the equator and is composed of languages that have been recognized since the 16th century as being remarkably similar. As such, linguists are certain that Bantu languages spread out from a common region within the last three or four millennia.

In historical terms, the Shona speaking area has remained remarkably homogeneous. The only significant non-Shona languages spoken within the main Shona area are Ndebele, dating from 1838 and English, dating from 1890.

The first classification of Shona was conducted with the advice of Professor Clement Doke, a Bantu linguist in 1931. Doke estimated that the dialects of Shona shared from 80% to 90% of their vocabulary. Doke recommended basing standard Shona on two dialects, that is Zezuru and Karanga.

24. WEIGHTS & MEASURES

kilometer	**kiromita**
meter	**mita**
mile	**maira**
gallon	**garoni**
liter	**rita**
kilogram	**kirogiramu**
gram	**giramu**
pound	**paundi**

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